

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (currently amended): An acicular body comprising at least one oxide of at least one metal selected from the group consisting of gallium, indium, thallium, rare earth metals, and mixtures thereof; said acicular body having a polygonal cross section and a cross-sectional dimension less than about 20 μm .

Claim 6 (previously presented): An acicular body comprising at least one oxide of at least one metal selected from the group consisting of scandium, yttrium, lanthanum, thallium, cesium, praseodymium, neodymium, europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium, lutetium, and mixtures thereof; said acicular body having a polygonal cross section and a cross-sectional dimension less than about 20 μm .

Claims 7-33 (canceled)

Claim 34 (previously presented): An acicular body comprising at least one oxide of a rare earth metal; said acicular body having a polygonal cross section and a cross-sectional dimension less than about 20 μm .